UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(2)/8/Add.2
27 November 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Second session
Dakar, 30 November - 11 December 1998
Item 6(b) of the provisional agenda

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING

Relocation of the Convention secretariat to Bonn and possible liaison arrangements

Note by the secretariat

CONTENTS

		Paragraph	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	2
II.	MANAGEMENT OF COMMON PREMISES AND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS IN BONN	5 - 7	2
III.	TRANSFER OF STAFF TO BONN	8 - 9	3
IV.	PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE SECRETARIAT	10 - 15	3
V.	ARRANGEMENTS FOR LIAISON WITH PARTIES AFTER THE RELOCATION OF THE CONVENTION SECRETARIAT TO BONN	16 - 20	4
VI.	ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A NETWORK OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS	21 - 23	4

GE.98-73072

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its first session, the Conference of the Parties, in its decision 5/COP.1:

(a) Requested the Executive Secretary to consult authorities of the host Government regarding arrangements for the smooth transition from the Interim to the Permanent Secretariat;

(b)

Invited the Executive Secretary to promote conditions of service in Bonn consistent with the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules and strive to maintain a critical mass of the existing secretariat team by encouraging experienced staff members of all categories and linguistic background to relocate; and

(c) Expressed its appreciation to the Government of Germany for its commitment to fulfil the terms of its offer to host the Permanent Secretariat and to facilitate the resettlement of its staff in attractive conditions.

2. Furthermore, in its decision 13/COP.1, the Conference of the Parties welcomed and fully supported "efforts of convention secretariats, in response to requests from the respective Conference of the Parties, to explore, where appropriate, modalities for suitable liaison arrangements in Geneva and/or New York for the purpose of enhancing linkages with delegations and organizations at those United Nations centres".

3. Specific information and recommendations for collaboration with other convention secretariats and relevant organizations are contained in document ICCD/COP(2)/7, "Collaboration and synergies among Rio Conventions for the implementation of the UNCCD".

4. The present note provides further information on the relocation of the secretariat to Bonn, possible liaison arrangements at relevant United Nations centres and the network of national focal points of the Convention.

II. MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMON PREMISES AND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS IN BONN

5. The Executive Secretary intends to conclude arrangements with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the participation of the secretariat in the management, use and servicing of the common United Nations premises in Bonn. Discussions between the Executive Secretary and the Executive Director of the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), as the organization responsible for the management of the common premises at Haus Carstanjen in Bonn, are ongoing in order to conclude a memorandum of understanding regarding the occupancy, use and maintenance of the premises and the sharing of the associated costs. The cost of such participation is reflected in the document, "Adjustment to the Convention budget and programme in 1999" (ICCD/COP(2)/2, para. 59)

6. In addition to participation in the management of common premises, the Executive Secretary has undertaken discussions with the United Nations organizations located at Haus Carstanjen, namely the United Nations Environment Programme/Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and UNV for the development of collaborative efforts on a number of functions and programmes which have common tasks and approaches, particularly in the field of administration and information systems, including library services and conference management.

7. In close collaboration with the other United Nations organizations located at Haus Carstanjen, the Executive Secretary is also participating in the discussions with the Government of Germany on the issue of improving the status and functioning of the international organizations in Germany with a view to achieving the status of other United Nations locations in Europe.

III. TRANSFER OF STAFF TO BONN

8. The Executive Secretary consulted all staff members of the secretariat to determine which of them were ready to take up positions with the secretariat in Bonn. Over 70 per cent of the staff indicated their readiness to relocate, while the remainder indicated their inability to transfer to Bonn for personal and family reasons. Relocation of the former will be effective from 1 February 1999 and separation of the latter will start from 31 December 1998.

9. The process of developing a new institutional framework for the secretariat and settling into a new working and living environment will divert energies from the regular work of the secretariat. The Executive Secretary and his colleagues will do everything possible to minimize the consequences of this diversion. Nevertheless, the process of adaptation will no doubt affect the productivity of the secretariat during the first months of 1999.

IV. PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

10. The secretariat, together with its counterparts, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has arranged for the relocation of the secretariat to Bonn. The relocation will coincide with the setting up of a new institutional arrangement as permanent secretariat of the Convention, outside the regular budget of the United Nations and with a greater degree of autonomy for its administration.

11. The arrangements for the relocation are proceeding successfully, and the offices and staff of the secretariat are tentatively planned to move in the period 18 January to 5 February 1999. During this period, the secretariat will suspend its normal activities and reduce its external relations to a minimum.

12. The secretariat is expected to open for work in Bonn on **8 February 1999**. As mentioned above, it will take some time thereafter before the secretariat is able to operate at full capacity. The address of the secretariat from that date will be as follows:

Postal address:	Post Office Box 260129 Haus Carstanjen D-53153 Bonn Germany
Office Location:	Haus Carstanjen Martin-Luther-King-Strasse 8 D-53175 Bonn
Telephone:	(49-228)8152800 (plus direct dial for all staff)
Fax:	(49-228)8152899
E-mail:	secretariat@unccd.de (plus direct e-mail for all staff)
Web home page:	www.unccd.de

13. As stated above and in document ICCD/COP(2)/9, the necessary administrative steps are being taken to ensure a smooth transition and the physical relocation of the secretariat to Bonn is expected to happen during the second part of January 1999. It is important to note however, that the actual timing of the relocation will also depend on how quickly the secretariat receives the contributions to the core budget by Parties.

14. With regard to the ratification of the headquarters agreement (see details in document ICCD/COP(2)/8 and Add.1) by the German parliament ('Bundestag'), Germany adopted an 'Ordinance' on 22 October 1998 which has allowed for most of the articles contained in the agreement to enter into force upon completion of the formal requirements by the United Nations and the Conference of the Parties. The remaining articles, i.e., Article 3, paragraph 3 and Articles 4 and 5, will enter into force immediately following completion of the outstanding formal procedures by Germany, the United Nations and the Conference of the Parties. It is expected that the ratification process by Germany will be completed in early spring 1999.

15. Once the secretariat is established in Bonn, it will follow up outstanding matters, in particular, the search for additional office, library and meeting space as foreseen for the biennium 2000-2001 in the document, "Adjustment to the Convention budget and programme for 1999" (ICCD/COP(2)/2, annex II).

V. ARRANGEMENTS FOR LIAISON WITH PARTIES AFTER THE RELOCATION OF THE CONVENTION SECRETARIAT TO BONN

16. The secretariat requests to be advised, upon its relocation to Bonn, whether the Parties and observers wish their principal liaison with it to be through their Embassies in Bonn or Berlin, or through their missions in New York or Geneva.

17. With regard to arrangements for liaison of the secretariat in relevant United Nations centres, in cooperation with other secretariats, consultations with relevant secretariats are under way to explore the possibility of developing liaison capacities in New York, Geneva and Rome. This liaison capacity would enable Parties that so prefer to continue to cover the Convention from their New York or Geneva missions and would also facilitate interaction between the secretariat and New York, Geneva and Rome based programmes and activities related to combating desertification. In Geneva it will also provide liaison with the United Nations Office at Geneva, from which the Convention will continue to receive services in 1999 and 2000, in particular for administrative matters as well as for the translation, reproduction and distribution of documents, and other conference services.

18. For 1999, the Executive Secretary is arranging for the maintenance of such liaison through cooperative arrangements with other United Nations offices and partner organizations. The budgetary implications are shown in the document, "Adjustment to the Convention budget and programme for 1999" (ICCD/COP(2)/2, para. 59).

19. An evaluation of such arrangements will be presented to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session for decision on their extension thereafter.

VI. ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A NETWORK OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

20. The Convention budget for 1999 includes provision for the establishment and maintenance of a network of national focal points for the Convention (ICCD/COP(2)/2, para. 44-48).

21. Further to the request contained in paragraph 17 above, Parties and observers are therefore invited to nominate national focal points to facilitate assistance for the implementation of the UNCCD at the national level and, in

particular, for the preparation of the national reports or communications requested by Article 26 of the Convention. In this context, and bearing in mind that the first national reports from Parties are due, in accordance with paragraphs 13 and 15 of decision 11/COP.1, as from mid 1999, nominations for national focal point(s) should be received no later than 31 December 1998.

22. The secretariat has prepared a tentative list of focal points for the Convention which is contained in the document: "Preliminary directory of focal points of the UNCCD" (ICCD/COP(2)Inf.4). Instructions for its update are provided in the document. As soon as nominations are confirmed, the secretariat will publish an updated version in hard copy and in electronic format.